

OUR FICTION MAGAZINE

HUNTING ARBUTUS

DATTY trudged over the canal bridge and down the road with her head held very high in the air. The Dedham place was just the other side of the canal, and her expedition was not so much a search for arbutus as it was a declaration of feminine independence.

Almost as far back as she could remember she and Dan Dedham had sought the first arbutus together every spring. There were other wooded patches about the little village, but these were the Woods. All others had names.

Then had come another age when Dan had gone to work and she was in the normal. Some pleasant afternoon, in passing his father's store, she would find Dan on the lookout for her, a bag of candy in his pocket and a note of invitation in his eyes. She would nod her assent and presently they would be off to the woods, to return just before supper time, their arms full of fragrant blooms.

This year all that was changed. Patty had graduated and had come to have a mission, a mission with a capital M and a world-embracing object. The preceding summer she had visited a friend in the city, and had come home with her mind filled with arguments in favor of suffrage for women. Straightaway she had begun to form a club among her ac-

quaintances. The town was just recovering from the Browning fad, and the faddists



"I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME," SAID PATTY SOFTLY.

were ready to welcome something they could understand better. "Votes for Women" became the feminine slogan, and mere man fared badly in the first flush of enthusiasm, for

suffragists found little masculine sympathy. Dan had been one of the ring-leaders among the younger men and his nickname, "the Suffering One," had clung to them until it stung.

Patty would not descend to open argument with Dan, but that young man soon found that it was a wasteful extravagance to buy two seats for entertainments when Patty always found some convenient previous engagement, and Dan would not go with any other girl.

The arbutus quest was designed to put a final rebuff upon the scoffer. The club had rapidly lost membership of late because the pioneers were unable to withstand ridicule, and Dan's nickname had been a cause more potent than all the rest.

Patty had waited until she had seen Dan go home, and then, after due interval, she had fared forth.

As she anticipated, Dan was working in the garden, getting the flower beds in shape, and she smiled maliciously as he leaned on his rake to watch her go by, even while regret clutched her heart. She pretended not to have seen him, and with serene unconcern, she slipped through the bars of the meadow lot and started across the fields.

It was pleasant in the woods even though it was lonesome. Now and then a black and yellow garter snake would slide silently across her path, and more than ever Patty wished that Dan was there. She was not afraid of garter snakes. She knew that they were far more afraid of her, but all

the same it was pleasant to have someone at her side with a stick.

The pink blooms were plentiful on the hillside. Patty knew just where to go for the best, and it was not long before her basket was full of the fragrant blossoms. She had been in the woods less than half an hour, and yet she was glad when the basket overflowed.

She dropped her basket to the ground as she prepared to scramble through the bars, but she straightened up with a cry of alarm as a bull came charging toward her.

Patty snatched up her flaming red bow and stuffed it in her pocket, but still the bull was not appeased. He kept pushing his head as far over the fence as he could in his effort to reach her, and she shrank still further back in alarm.

The situation was not at all pleasant. The woods were to be reached only across a valley back of the ridge, and through this ran a small but rapid stream, too deep to be waded and too wide to be crossed at a jump. A rude bridge was thrown across the stream here—the only means of crossing. "If I had known that you wanted to come today I could have arranged to get off, but I had prom-

ised—and it was unusual for the owner to keep his bull in this field.

"Burnham's bull" was the local synonym for all that was bad-tempered in Clarisville, and many were the tales of its savage disposition. Patty knew the stories, but she had never before seen the bull.

He looked singularly mild for so ferocious an animal, but she trusted not to look, and since he commanded the only way across the hollow, she would have to make the detour by the back road and add several miles to her walk.

She was still pondering the situation, when a tall figure loomed up against the sky line on the other side of the valley. Even in the fading light she could recognize Dan's confident carriage, and in her terror she forgot her displeasure and screamed a warning.

Apparently Dan did not notice the bull nor realize her warning, for he waved his hand at the sound of her cry and came running down the hill toward her.

"The bull!" screamed Patty. "Go back or climb a tree!"

Dan made no reply, but came on across the bridge, and presently he had vaulted the fence and stood beside her before the bull had seen him.

"I'm so glad you came," said Patty softly. "I'll never come to the woods alone again."

"Why did you do it this time?" asked Dan, to get her flower beds ready, and once I had started I did

not want to stop until I was through. I thought that I would be in time to walk home with you at any rate."



"BURNHAM'S BULL."

Patty's spirit rose at his prompt acceptance of the speech as a desire for his society. "I am glad that you have come only because of the bull," she explained with dignity.

"Burnham's bull?" he asked. "That's not Burnham's bull."

"I suppose that you want to tell me that it is a cow," said Patty chillingly. "I don't suppose that I can tell a bull from a cow. Why the horns alone—"

"That is a bull," he interrupted, "but not the bull. This one is Jess Burnham's pet. He is as meek as the meekest cow you ever saw. Jess raised him, and he follows her like a dog. He thought you had come to bring him salt. Jess always does."

"And here I was thinking that I should have to take the back road," went on Patty as she slipped through the gate and started for the bridge.

The young bull, still intent upon salt, started to follow her, but a mild "Shoot!" scared him away. At the bridge Patty paused.

"Are you coming, Dan?" she called.

"You don't want me now that there is no danger," he reminded.

"Perhaps that was not—all," confessed Patty shyly. "It was meant to hunt arbutus alone," she added as he came running up, "but you called my society names."

"I won't do it again," he promised. "If you'll make a life contract to hunt arbutus with me, is it a bargain?"

"If you say you're sorry," she stipulated.

"I'm not," he denied as he bent and kissed her. "I'm the happiest man in the country, thanks to you and that blessed bull. He broke the ice."

THEIR PLAN

CARLETON SANFORD regarded, with a pleased smile, the little pile of packages and letters beside his plate. The other boarders looked up with pleasant greetings as he took his place, and Sanford decided that it was a pleasant thing to have a birthday.

He turned first to the letters and opened before the others the familiar blue square which always covered Janet Bryce's notes.

It was just a line or two wishing him a pleasant birthday and adding that she had ordered a book sent him

bashful in the extreme. It was that which had held him back from proposing to Janet years before. He loved her, and he thought that she loved him, but he could not bring his courage to the point of making a definite proposal of marriage.

As quickly as he could he made his escape from the table without making any display of his other packages and, presently, he had started on a brisk walk to the office.

On the way, Cady's taunt kept ringing through his head. Perhaps, after all, Janet had sent the book. It was leap year and girls sometimes did avail themselves of their legendary privileges.

He could not altogether blame her if she had. It was four years since

architect," he said. "Those prepared plans are seldom just what you want. You can't tell me what you will like best."

"What are you talking about?" she demanded.

"That book of plans for \$3,000 houses," he said innocently.

Janet glanced at his wine glass. It was still half full. It could not be that. "I don't know anything about a house," she said. "What has that to do with the book?"

"You can't get out of it that way," asserted Sanford with a laugh. "I needed the hint. Why should you try to deny the book?"

"I'm not trying to deny the book," she said a trifle crossly, "but what has the 'Dictionary of Science' to do with houses and what house are you talking about?"

"The house I'm going to build on that lot I bought a couple of years ago," he explained. "I'm going to build if you'll promise to marry me and live in it. I think, after all, that we'll pick out one of the houses in the book."

"There are no plans in the dictionary," said Janet, regarding him anxiously. "What is the matter, Carl? Why are you mixing houses and books and plans?"

"It's all right; it's leap year," he reminded, "but don't tell me that you sent me the 'Dictionary of Science.' It was a book of plans of houses that can be built for \$3,000, if you can dream as well as the man who draws the plans."

"But I ordered the dictionary sent," she insisted.

"And they sent the plans," he explained. "It's some mistake in the delivery room, but I thought you were trying to make a leap-year suggestion that it was about time we had a house."

"The idea," exclaimed Janet.

"It's a good idea," said Sanford reflectively. "When I bought that lot I meant then to build our home, but somehow I always was afraid to propose. Now that we have the lot and the plans, there is only one thing more I need."

"The money for building?" asked the unsuspecting Janet.

"You," said Sanford fervently. "Won't you complete the outfit, dear?"

Janet laughed, but her eyes were tender. "You don't deserve an answer," she declared. "To such an absurd proposal, but I'll complete the outfit, dear. If you'll promise not to say that I proposed to you."

Jokelets

Alarmed Him.

The great foreigner was surrounded by a mob of admirers.

"Give me your ear a minute," pleaded one.

"And give me your eye a minute," echoed another, who wanted to point out the scenery.

"And give me your nose a minute," added a third, with a huge bouquet.

The celebrated foreigner was nonplussed.

"By ze shades of Bonaparte!" he exclaimed. "I have often heard zat ze Americans vere great souvenir hunters, but I did not know zat ze would take a man to pieces. I better get away from here while I am yet whole."

Satisfied.

"Look here!" grumbled the old farmer. "This here almanac is a fraud. It predicted snow for yesterday and, by gum, it was hot as blazes all day."

"But, my dear sir," responded the bland almanac peddler, "it snowed up at the north pole yesterday."

"It did?" he drawled slowly. "Wal, I reckon the almanac is all right then. It did tell the truth, didn't it?"

Much Better.

Yes, he's in the has-been class. Yet he is proud because

He thinks 'tis better thus by far Than to be a never-was.

Pushed to It.

Miss Gotox—"The count was awfully embarrassed when he proposed to me."

Miss Poorman—"Yes, poor fellow. He probably proposed because he couldn't afford to do otherwise."

Natural Deduction.

Said She—"I wonder how those spiritual communications are written?"

Said He—"With a medium pen or pencil, I imagine."

Too Much for Her.

A woman can easily make up her face. Likewise her figure, you'll find; But ten to one she'll not make good When she tries to make up her mind.

Exactly the Same.

Askitt—"What do you know about Blank's veracity?"

Noitt—"Oh, his word is as good as his bond."

Askitt—"Are you sure?"

Noitt—"Yes; but his bond is worthless."

Made Him Cross.

"I made my husband cross this afternoon," said Mrs. Caller.

"How was that?" queried Mrs. Homer.

"He was on the opposite side of the street and I beckoned him to come over," explained the other.

HATE AND LOVE

WILL you be a good boy now and make friends with Harry?" demanded Jean Thayer as she bent over the tiny figure huddled at the desk. George Bryan shook his head. "Harry is a bad boy," he said severely. "I hate him."

Jean took the little fellow on her lap. But you must not hate him or anyone," she said in the soft tones that seemed almost a caress. "It is wrong to hate."

"Don't you ever hate no one?" demanded George. "Not even him?"

He pointed awesomely toward the principal, dimly visible through the glass partitions dividing the classes. It was Prof. Webster's habit to poke his head into the classroom a dozen times a day and glance severely over the rows of hushed and expectant scholars. To George these visits were terrifying.

The professor always seemed to be on the lookout for small victims to take up on the high platform, there to squirm under his frowning gaze until he considered that they had been sufficiently punished. He himself had spent part of the afternoon on the platform because of a fight in which he had engaged during recess.

As school was dismissed he was told to make friends with his late antagonist and he had refused. Therefore he was detained as punishment. He did not mind staying. It was no great punishment when he could sit at the desk and watch Miss Thayer's pretty face bent over the exercise books. He was still impatient, but gently the girl coaxed him into a softer mood, and in the end she kissed the careful face and told him that he might go.

Her lesson had sunk in deeply, as in gentle tones she had explained that hatred was an evil thing, but most astonishing was the fact that the "teacher" loved everyone, even including the terrifying principal.

He was strong in his determination to follow her example and love everyone, but he was pretty sure that he could not bring himself to love the professor, no matter how willing he might be to forget his anger at Harry Sangston.

Presently his little feet went pattering down the long corridor formed by the partitions. The heavy little boots felt with lighter tread as they approached the dreaded desk, but the faint hope that he might pass the principal without observation died as Webster looked sharply over the edge of his desk.

"You were detained after school?"

he asked severely. "I am afraid you are incorrigible."

"I ain't," said George stoutly. He did not know what the long word meant, but he was certain that he was not as bad as that.

"You are the little boy who was sent to the desk this afternoon?" demanded the professor. "I believe you were fighting. What was the last trouble?"

"I wouldn't make up with Harry and teacher kept me in," explained the boy. "I'm going to be good now," he added virtuously.

"It is to be hoped so," was the grave response. "If you continue to be as bad as you have been today I am afraid that something dreadful will happen. No one loves bad little

fact that the ogre had given him a nickel.

As the door downstairs banged, Jean came from the classroom, dressed for the street.

"You are later than usual," said the principal kindly as she passed the desk. "I am afraid that in punishing your refractory pupil you have punished yourself more."

"I had to go over the exercise books," she explained. "And I had a little talk with George."

"With 'Love thy neighbor' as a text," he suggested. "The boy was telling me of his chat."

"He is a dear little fellow," said Jean with a smile. "I think I shall have no more trouble with him."

"He has put me under deep obligation," said Webster gravely. "He has made a discovery that interests me greatly. He tells me that you said you loved me."

"That was a part of the lesson," stammered Jean, the crimson flooding her face. "He picked you out as the most awesome person he could think of. I had to say 'yes' to be consistent."

"And it was solely in the interest of the moral lesson?" he questioned shrewdly. "I may not hope that your confession was based on fact?"

"I do not dislike you, of course," explained Jean. "We were only talking of love for a fellow-man."

"But I am talking now of the love of a man for a woman," went on Webster. "Don't you think that you might learn to love me—Jean? Surely you must have seen that I loved you."

"I told George the truth," she confessed softly.

IT WAS PROF. WEBSTER'S HABIT TO POKe HIS HEAD INTO THE ROOM ABOUT A DOZEN TIMES A DAY.

boys."

"Teacher does," defended George. "She says it's wicked to hate anyone. She loves everyone. She loves you, too."

"I presume so, since she loves everyone," was the quiet response.

George climbed the stairs in his earnestness to defend his idol.

"But she loves you specially," he explained. "I asked her did she love you and she got red and said 'Yes,' like she was ashamed of it."

The grave eyes behind the gold-rimmed spectacles twinkled as they regarded the youngster.

"I am very much obliged for the information," said Webster. "May I suggest that I saw some very nice apples on the cart on the corner? Let me stand treat."

With grating mouth George received the proffered coin and sped down the steps as fast as his short, fat legs could take him. His infantile mind could not fully grasp the

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"THE IDEA," EXCLAIMED JANET.

which would come direct from the store, as they did not have it in stock.

The package was there and with nervous fingers Sanford untied the string. It was probably the "Dictionary of Science" he had asked her to price for him, but instead the book bore the title, "Three Thousand Dollar Homes," and Jack Cady, who liked to consider himself a humorist, laughed joyously.

"It's from a lady," he declared. "It's a new sort of leap year proposal. I call that real neat."

"It's a book I ordered the other day," insisted Sanford stoutly, but his crimson face betrayed him, and through the rest of the meal he glowered at Cady, who insisted upon telling stories of friends of his who had started to build \$3,000 houses and had found they were compelled to pay anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000."

To a bashful man, the situation was unpleasant, and Sanford was

they had met each other, and most of that time he had had a right to be angry. They were not openly engaged; they could not be until he had found the nerve to propose, but their friendship kept others from making any effort to win Janet's favor.

Soon she would be regarded as a confirmed old maid. She had a right to hint. He went to the telephone as soon as he reached the office and made an appointment to meet her for dinner.

It was not until the coffee came that Sanford found courage to speak of the book and give proper thanks.

"I'm glad that it got there in time," said Janet with a smile. "It is not kept in stock and they had to send for it, but they promised to get it there by last night if they possibly could. I don't see what you want of such a silly thing."

"I think it is better to go to an

place, to plan for furnishings and the disposition of the space, and each evening she returned to the boarding house where she was spending the summer, more enthusiastic than ever about the plan.

It required only her father's consent—and financial assistance—to make the dream a reality and he had promised to come up the following week to look the place over.

When Amy received his letter she smilingly set out to make a minute inventory of the many advantages of the house.

She frowned as on her approach she perceived Clyde on the porch, comfortably smoking a cigarette. He had even raised the drawbridge and the stream was just a trifle too wide to be jumped.

"Want to come across?" he cried as he noted her approach.

"Of course," was the reply, rather more sharp than Amy's usual tone. "Father will be here Monday and I want to make a note of all the good points of the place, so that in my excitement I shall not forget anything. I wish that you would go away, Clyde. You know that I never can think with you chattering all the time."

"I like that!" cried Clyde in mock

anger as he dropped the bridge. "Would you drive a man from his

own property in that fashion?"

"When did you change your name

to Beekman?" demanded Amy laughingly.

"I didn't," explained Clyde. "I merely changed the Beekman place over to my name."

"You bought this place?" gasped Amy. "You bought it when you knew how much I wanted it?"

"I followed an excellent example in wanting it," declared Clyde. "You wanted it yourself and you can't blame me for approving your choice. I want it for a club, too."

"For a lot of noisy men?" declared Amy with the scorn. "I suppose that you'll play poker on the piazza and some day one of you will set the house on fire with a cigarette! I hope that you do it—soon!"

"Amiable person," said Lillard with a lazy laugh. "You err in your surmise, though. This is to be a most exclusive club. Not everyone may come into this Land of the Blest."

"Land of the Blest?" That's a funny name for a club," scoffed Amy. "I suppose that the name was chosen because it is so inappropriate."

"Disappointment leads to intemperance of speech," said Lillard. "To the contrary, if I am able to form the club to my liking the title will be most appropriate."

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MY WEYMER believed in doing a thing with all her might and so it happened that when the idea came to her for the Paradise Club she devoted her time to the outworking of the idea and thereby providing the embryonic organization with an enemy in the shape of Clyde Lillard, who seemed, unreasonably enough, to be attracted to this idea for a summer club for the girls Amy knew.

"Adamless Eden" was the least complimentary of the names Clyde applied to the club. For two years he had been seeking to hold Amy's interest long enough to convince her that he loved her, but Amy's pretty little head was filled with schemes for philanthropic work and she gave herself unreservedly to her fads.

This newest idea was the purchase of the old Beekman property and making it over into a club for working girls in whom she took such an interest.

The Beekman place was an aban-

doned farm on a back road, sufficiently remote from the traveled highway to be free from the visits of tramps and yet close enough to the town to render the purchase of supplies a matter of ease.

There were only five acres of ground, bare, stony soil from which the scanty stock of nutriment had long since been exhausted by a faulty farming plan. Now rank grass covered the meadow and young trees were beginning to replace the wood lot sacrificed when the Beekman fortunes began to fall.

Only the house was still worth while and this was what had first caught Amy's attention.

It was built on the very